The F99/K00: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

In addition to these F99/K00-specific topics, you may wish to review FAQs for the F31 Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) for help in preparing the application (remember to select the appropriate F31 filters.

General Topics

Eligibility

Career Stage
At the time of application, you must be a 3rd or 4th year graduate student enrolled in a Ph.D. program, calculated from the time of enrollment, at a US institution.

- In rare cases involving documented Leaves of Absence (for example, a maternity leave or an extended illness), exceptions may be granted. Check with the Program Official. If granted, the exception should be explained in the Nomination Letter.
- Nominees must be at the dissertation stage before an award can be made. This means the nominee must have has passed any and all requirements set by the nominee's institution for advancement to the Ph.D. candidacy stage. The candidacy requirements are to be described in the "Additional Educational Information" section of the application.
- If you complete the PhD degree requirements or begin a postdoctoral position before the F99 award is made, neither the F99 nor the K00 award will be made.
- Students enrolled in dual-degree programs are not eligible for this pilot program, even if the degrees are completed in separate phases.

Citizenship
There is no citizenship requirement; you may be a US citizen or permanent resident, or hold a valid U.S. visa.

- A Certification Letter for an applicant holding a U.S. Visas must be uploaded in the "other Attachments" section of the application. The Certification Letter must be on institutional letterhead and scanned so that an institutional official signature is visible. A copy of the visa must also be attached.

Nomination Process
You must be nominated by your institution.

- Only one nomination is allowed per institution per year; your institution determines the nomination process.
- An institution is identified as having a unique DUNS or NIH IPF number.
- An institution may choose to nominate the same person two years in a row, if the nominee does not receive an award the first time and is still eligible.

Diversity
All institution-nominated eligible candidates, including those from underrepresented groups, are encouraged to apply.

Foreign Components
Although foreign institutions are not eligible, foreign components are allowed. See the NIH Grants Policy Statement, especially Section 1. Glossary, 1.2 Definition of Terms and Section 16 Grants to Foreign Organizations, International Organizations, and Domestic Grants with Foreign Components, 2. Eligibility.

Relationship with the F31 Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) and other Fellowships

- You may submit an F99/K00 application if you are an F31 awardee, have an F31 application under review, or plan to submit an F31. However, only one fellowship award may be active at any given time. F31 awardees will need to terminate the F31 prior to accepting the F99/K00.
- The F99/K00 is not an NRSA fellowship. Having prior NRSA support does not impact the years of support that may be requested for the F99/K00. Similarly, having an F99/K00 award does not impact any eligibility for future NRSA support.
- Neither the F99 phase nor the K00 phase may be held concurrently with another federally sponsored fellowship or similar Federal award that provides a stipend or salary, or otherwise duplicates the provisions of this award.

Sponsor

- The primary F99 sponsor needs to demonstrate the research resources, scientific and technical expertise, and mentorship experience to effectively mentor you.
- The roles of any co-sponsors should be clearly described in the application.

Guidance for Preparing The Initial F99/K00 Application

Use the Fellowship (F31-specific) section of SF424 (R&R) application package for guidance, except where the instructions in the funding opportunity announcement (RFA-CA-16-005) states otherwise.

This part is listed in the order it appears in the Fellowship Instructions of the Application Guide.

Please pay special attention to the following sections that deviate significantly from the F31 application:
- **The Nomination Letter** - required
- **The Specific Aims** – please follow the specific instructions below, also posted on the F99 home page
- **The Research Strategy Section**– please follow the specific instructions below, also posted on the F99 home page
- **The Doctoral Dissertation and Research Experience section** (do not include)

Cover Page

- Item 12, Start Date: refers to the start of the F99 phase. The earliest start date is September.
- Item 12, End Date: refers to the end of the K00 phase.
- Item 15, Estimated Project Funding: The estimate covers both phases. See the Budget section of RFA-CA-16-005. If an award is made, the NIH Grants Management Specialist will verify the tuition and fees for the F99 phase. At the time of transition to the K00 phase, awardees will be asked to submit a new budget as part of the transition application.

Research & Related Other Project Information

- Item 6, International activities: Although foreign institutions are not allowed to apply, foreign components are permitted.
- Item 12, Other Attachments: This is the place to upload the **Nomination Letter**, and if applicable the **Certification Letter and Visa** for applicants holding U.S. visas, along with other documents mentioned in the Application Guide, such as the required **Additional Educational Information** and Letters of Support.

Nomination Letter
- Required, limited to 1 page.
- An institutional nomination letter confirming that the applicant is a predoctoral student in the 3rd or 4th year of a PhD program in an appropriate field and desires a career as an independent investigator in cancer research. The name of the primary sponsor and an affirmation of the institution's commitment to the applicant's training and research career goals should also be included in this letter. The letter should be provided by the head of the graduate program and be signed by this individual and the institution's Authorized Organizational Representative.

Additional Educational Information
- This is the same as for F31 applications.
- A description of the graduate program in which the applicant is enrolled, e.g. the structure of the program, required milestones and their usual timing (number of courses, any teaching commitments, qualifying exams, etc.), and the average time to degree over the past 10 years.
- Describe the progress/status of the applicant in relation to the program's time line.
- Describe the frequency and method by which the program formally monitors and evaluates a student's progress.
- This information is typically provided by the director of the graduate program or the department chair. Include the name of the individual providing this information at the end of the description.
- A description of the resources available to the applicant including the availability of such resources as might be associated with an Office of Graduate Education.
- Note that a listing of the applicant's courses and grades must be included in the Fellowship Applicant Biographical Sketch, and NOT in this attachment.

Certification Letter and Visa (if applicable)
- If the applicant is not a U.S. Citizen or permanent resident, the sponsoring institution must include information about the candidate's visa status, an assurance that the candidate's visa provides sufficient time to complete the F99 phase of the award at a U.S. institution, and assurance that there are no known obstacles (e.g. home country requirement) to the candidate obtaining a visa at the time of the K00 transition.
- Include a copy of the applicant's current visa.

Key Personnel
- Applicants are to use the Predoctoral Biosketch form. See the Application Instructions and the F31 FAQs.
- Manuscripts that are submitted or in preparation may be listed on the F99 applicant's biosketch, but not on the biosketch of a Sponsor, Co-sponsor, or any other significant contributors.

PHS Fellowship Supplemental Form

There are four parts to the Supplemental form.
Part A. Application Type
Part B. Research Training Plan
Part C. Additional Information
Part D. Sponsor and Co-Sponsor Information

Part A. Application Type
- Resubmissions and renewals are not allowed.

Part B. Research Training Plan

Specific Aims
The Specific Aims page is limited to 1 page. All applications should have these Specific Aims:
- Aim 1: The Dissertation Research Project – goal, rationale, hypotheses, and progress thus far
- Aim 2: The Dissertation Research Project – work to be completed
- Aim 3: The Postdoctoral Research Direction

Research Strategy
- The Research Strategy is limited to 6 pages.
- Aim 1: In <u>narrative style</u>, describe the overall goal, rationale, hypotheses, and approaches of the dissertation research project; describe progress made thus far; highlight skills and techniques that contribute to the long-term career goal.
- Aim 2: Provide a <u>detailed description</u> of the research to be completed in the F99 phase, including experimental design, anticipated results, and potential follow-up studies. Highlight new skills to be learned.
- Aim 3: In <u>narrative style</u>, describe the research direction for the K00 phase, including technical and career development skills to be acquired, as well as a plan for identifying a postdoctoral mentor.
- Please note that the Research Strategy format is a departure from the traditional format of "Hypothesis-Experiment-Interpretation." Applicants are encouraged to relate the Aims to the career goals.

Other Sections
Human Subjects
- As applicable to the F99-phase research.
- Follow [current NIH guidelines](#) , read the FAQs, and include the Human Subjects section in your application.
- Common mistakes involve the E4 exemption status, and human specimens, cell lines or data.
- *It is important to note that an investigator, as it pertains to research involving human subjects, is defined as anyone involved in conducting the research.* Individuals who provide coded information or specimens and collaborate on other activities related to the conduct of the research with the investigators who receive such information or specimens, are considered to be involved in the research. This includes providers who will be co-authors.
- IRB approval is needed before an award can be made.

Vertebrate Animals
- As applicable to the F99-phase research.
- Follow [current NIH Guidelines](#)and include a Vertebrate Animal Section in the application.

Select Agents
- As applicable to the F99-Phase Research.

Resource Sharing Plan
- As applicable to the F99-phase research.
- Include this, even though it is not technically required. It will save time if your application is funded.
- It is NIH policy that the results and accomplishments of the activities that it funds should be made available to the public. PIs and funding recipient institutions are expected to make the results and accomplishments of their activities available to the research community and to the public at large.
- There is special guidance for research involving specific topics, such as Genomic Data

Sharing, Model Organisms, and Data Sharing.
- See https://grants.nih.gov/grants/sharing.htm for more information.

Respective Contributions
- Required; limited to 1 page.

Selection of Sponsor and Institution
- Applies to the F99-phase sponsor and institution.
- Required; limited to 1 page.

Responsible Conduct of Research
- Required; limited to 1 page.
- Don't forget that there are 5 required components:
  - the format (face to face and online components)
  - the topics covered (describe the course content)
  - faculty participation (who teaches the course)
  - the duration (the NIH requires 8 hours of face-to-face time)
  - the frequency (the NIH requires this to be repeated every 4 years and when you advance to a new career stage, i.e., the K00 phase)

Part C. Additional Information

Goals For Fellowship Training and Career
Required, limited to 1 page.

Activities Planned Under this Award
Required, limited to 1 page.

Doctoral Dissertation and Research Experience
DO NOT INCLUDE

Part D. Sponsor and Co-Sponsor Information
- Applies to the F99 phase sponsor(s).
- Describe the roles of co-sponsors, if applicable.
- Required, limited to 6 pages (inclusive of all co-sponsors).
- There are 5 parts to this (a – e).
a. Research Support Available – pertains to the funding that relates specifically to the F99 research. Do not include *unrelated* grant support, which should be listed in the sponsor's biosketch.
b. Prior Trainees - For each sponsor, list the total number of mentored predoctoral and postdoctoral individuals previously sponsored. Do not provide detailed information for more than 5 individuals form that total.
c. Training Plan, Environment, Research Facilities – describe a research training plan that is individualized for the applicant, including perceived gaps. Be specific about the role of any co-sponsors.
d. Number of Trainees to be Supervised – describe other predoctoral and postdoctoral members of the sponsor's (and co-sponsors if applicable) laboratory.
e. Applicant's Qualifications and Potential for a Research Career – Include information for a co-sponsor as well. This does not need to be written on letterhead, which takes up valuable space.

The Transition to the K phase

- The F99/K00 award is intended to facilitate successful transition to the postdoctoral career stage. Consequently, a requirement for activation of the K00 phase is successful completion of the Ph.D. degree and subsequent transition to a cancer-focused mentored postdoctoral research position.
- Applicants are encouraged to apply for postdoctoral positions at institutions different from where they conducted their doctoral research. In rare cases where an F99 awardee intends to stay at the predoctoral phase institution for the postdoctoral phase, the awardee should justify the choice in the transition application.
- The transition from the predoctoral phase to the postdoctoral phase is intended to be continuous in time. Ecept in unusual circumstances, NCI will not extend the F99 phase nor significantly delay the start of the K00 phase.
- To activate the K00 phase of the grant, individuals must have been offered and accepted a postdoctoral appointment to carry out cancer-focused research.
- Upon activation of the K00 phase of the award, the F99 phase of the award is terminated.
- A transition application is required for the K00 phase. Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the NCI Program Official as soon as a plan to assume a postdoctoral position develops, and not later than 4 months prior to the end of the F99 phase of the award.